To: Dr. Dose
From: Nick Hobbs
Subj: Handbook changes

Attached are the handbook changes recommended by legal council Lane & Waterman.

Concerning:

Graduation credits in the student handbook and the board book are the same. The board book needs to be changed to reflect twice the number showing. This is a result of changing student information management systems in the past few years but reflects no change or difference in the number of credits expected for graduation.

Page 15 Times will be added for morning detentions.

The absence policy will reflect what the board and policy committee have approved this year.

All other changes will be made as suggested by legal council.

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Re: Handbook Review

Dear Dr. Dose

You asked that we review school handbooks with an eye to avoiding legal complications. As you are aware, consistency is always very important. Therefore when we looked at statements made in the handbooks, we considered the statements not only in light of state and federal law, but also Board policies.

HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

It is not clear as to whether the statements made at page 10 concerning graduation credits are consistent with board policy 505.5.

On page 11 of the Handbook, a reference in the last paragraph under "Multicultural and Nonsexist Education" says that a copy of the FERPA Act is at the high school office. We question whether that is so, as most high schools only have their own FERPA or school records policy, and not a copy of the entire federal act. We suggest that it would be better to refer readers to the Board's policies on student records.

On page 15 of the Handbook, the Detention section says detentions may be served "before or after school Monday through Friday from 6:55 - 7:55 a.m." The times listed are only before school, not after. Are detentions served at another time as well?

Pages 20 and 21 of the Handbook extensively discuss "the six-day absence policy." From Handbook statements, it appears that even absences that are excused are counted against a student for purposes of "the six-day absence policy" and that students who have six or more days of excused absence may be denied class credit on that basis even though all work has been successfully completed. The Board Policy Manual does not contain a "six-day absence policy." I do not believe such a policy would be defensible in court, and strongly recommend against it.

Page 23 of the Handbook contains a section entitled "Attitional Guidelines." We assume this is a spelling glitch that should be corrected.

Random searches of lockers and desks do not require reasonable suspicion, as would a search of a particular student or group of students. On Page 29, under Lockers, we suggest tracking the language of the Iowa Code by adding a statement that says: **Lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to a student may be inspected by designated school officials at any time without prior notice and without any suspicion of wrong doing.**

On page 31, "Student to Student Harassment" contains the following statement: "Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure." In fact, investigators won't know whether behavior has violated the policy until after there has been an investigation. The Board policy states: "Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of the policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion." The same sentence appears in the junior high school and elementary handbooks. We suggest changing this sentence in both the handbooks and policy to state: **Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion.**

Page 34 of the Handbook addresses and bars student smoking but does not bar possession of tobacco. It seems inconsistent to list smoking as a topic when drinking and drugs are not similarly addressed, and the Board Policy barring smoking is 502.9, which is entitled "Smoking, Drinking, Drugs." We would suggest incorporating drinking and drugs, not just smoking.

Also on page 34, under "Student Parking" we suggest omitting the first four words of the first sentence of the third paragraph so that it would say: **School authorities may search a student's car without a warrant when there is reasonable suspicion that items in violation of school policies are inside.**

Pages 39 - 43 discuss in detail eligibility for, behavior at and participation in extra curricular activities. North Scott has adopted the Good Conduct Rule as Board Policy No. 503.4. We suggest that comparison be made to assure that the statements made on pages 39 - 43 conform to the Board's Good Conduct Rule, and suggest that a statement be added to inform

people that North Scott follows the Good Conduct Rule set forth in its Policy Manual as Board Policy No. 503.4.

On page 46, we suggest adding in place of the first sentence of the final paragraph of "School Records Policy" the following: **Board Policies 506.1 - 506.4 address in detail school records and the rights of parents and students under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, including the right to file a complaint alleging that the school district has failed to comply with policy.**

The current Board policy on dangerous weapons, 502.8, is accurate. A shortened, inaccurate version appears in many of the handbooks. Federal law requires that students possessing "firearms" be expelled for a minimum of one year, although that requirement can be modified on a case by case basis. State law allows the District to expel students who bring other types of dangerous weapons or look-alikes for up to one year. We suggest adding the entire Board Policy 502.8 to all of the district's school handbooks.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

See High School Handbook for comments that may also be applicable here.

On pages 5 and 6, and again at page 23, lockers are discussed. You may wish to combine these discussions. As with the High School Handbook, we suggest adding: **Lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to you may be inspected by designated school officials at any time without prior notice to you and without any suspicion of wrong doing.**

On page 19, in the very last paragraph under "Educational Records," there is a statement that the "following information may be released to the public in regard to any individual student of the school district as needed." However, the paragraph does not state what information that is. The section on educational records should but does not contain a statement defining "directory information," which is the information that may be released to the public unless there is a non-disclosure request.

On page 20, the section on "Eligibility for Extra Curricular Activities" does not list compliance with the Good Conduct Rule as a criterion for participation in extra curricular activities. We suggest adding it.

On page 21, under "Student to Student Harassment," on the last line of the page states "if **he** misconduct directly affects the good order," when it should be "if **the** misconduct directly affects the good order...." Also, as with the High School Handbook, there is a statement that "Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of the policy will be subject to the